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622 to have been the primary one of the leader. He decided where to go and when, in order to hunt, to seek lodge covers, to gather berries, to cut new tent- and travois-poles, and so on. He invited people, prominent men of his own band and of other bands, and fed [574] people every day. He would have provisions on hand and was prepared to carry out extensive hospitality. He would be one who had plenty of buffalo horses which younger men—his sons and nephews—would use on the hunt, and numerous pack horses which returned from the hunt laden with meat. His wives would invite old women, and especially needy ones, to help slice meat, prepare it for storage, to render grease and extract marrow, all of which these old women were glad to do in return for some fresh meat.

622 As explained by The Boy, a man had to work up from the ranks, so to speak, to be recognized as chief and as leader. "It paid to 555 be prosperous and a good man. In the course of time people would look up to him as leader and other bands would be told that he is the leader. He does not ask for this distinction but, if he is prosperous and good, people recognize him. The band gets together and tells him: 'You are our leader.' He holds 'office' for life. As he grows old he might tell the people to select someone else, but, even so, they would continue to look up to him and to ask his advice and consult him. There are obstacles in the path of life, and one who would rise must walk around or over them. To be an acknowledged leader a man must have distinguished himself at war, but many who were known for their brave deeds were not necessarily in line for leadership.[6] The kinds of things which would have prevented a man from receiving this type of recognition were the following. First of all, murder of one of his own band. For instance there was a well-known character who had

p. 147, mentions that "Each band seems to have had a recognized chief or leader."

[6] Denig, whose experience with the northern plains tribes extended from 1832 to 1854, expresses, p. 403, the concept as follows: "In fact the rank or standing of each Indian be he chief or warrior is so well known and his character so well judged by the vox populi that he takes his place spontaneously. A higher step than his acts and past conduct confer, imprudently taken, would have the effect of injuring him in their eyes as a leader. Every chief, warrior or brave carves his own way to fame, and if recognized as one by the general voice becomes popular and is supported; if not he mixes with hundreds of others in similar situation and waiting opportunity to rise."

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an outstanding war record, was known to be courageous and not afraid to die, yet, because he was quick-tempered and murdered a member of his own band, he forfeited what would have been a very good chance of becoming leader of his band. Second, a man who had the reputation of being woman-crazy, of bothering other men's wives, or who was guilty of rape or incest, would not be selected as leader. Furthermore, a man who wished to rise should control his temper, be good to others and avoid lying, back-biting and jealousy in regard to other prominent men. If he had these qualities, and was eminent at war, he would rise high in public esteem and be in the running not only as a leader of a band, or of the whole tribe, but also as Keeper of one of the Sacred Pipes."[1]

It was further explained by this same informant, The Boy, that if the leader died, there was a lot of talk both by members and non-members as to who was qualified to succeed. Those outside the band speculated on whom the choice would fall and said: "It ought to be so-and-so," and in this way attempt to influence the opinion as to which of the outstanding men of the band had the best qualifications. Soon a certain man became the leader, and once he was invited to a meeting of other band leaders he was "full-fledged."

In carrying out his duties, that is, in deciding when and where to move, the leader consulted with others and proceeded in a democratic fashion. If two or more bands were camped together, for instance, the leaders would consult among themselves and come to a decision as to whether or not the bands should remain together and as to where they should go. Other men would be present and any one of them apparently had the privilege of speaking his mind. "Suppose that the leader had decided that his band should leave the other and go to some particular spot. Someone in his band who disagreed with the decision would speak up and raise the question of, say, danger from the enemy. He would suggest a different place free from such danger and where game would be plentiful, where there was a good camping ground and sufficient water for the horses, etc. He would give his reasons in detail, and, if it

[1] The role of the Keepers of the Flat and Feathered Pipes is discussed in detail in Cooper, Ms. 1949.

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555 342 538 The more war-deeds a man performed, the more frequently was he the center of attention. Gradually he began to rise above others and finally he achieved recognition as an outstanding warrior. Only when a man reached this enviable height was he justified in having his war record painted on his lodge for all the world to admire. When a newly painted lodge of this kind was first erected, the owner initiated its use by giving a feast to which other prominent warriors were invited. From among the guests, the host "pulled up" one who was able to tell four brave exploits, each connected in some way with a different lodge belonging to the enemy. At the conclusion of each separate account, the warrior who was reciting hit the taut new lodge a resounding blow, thus attracting attention. Then while the guests were feasting and smoking with the host, crowds gathered around to examine the lodge and to discuss the record depicted thereon. It was said, too, that similar discussions took place when the Gros Ventres met on friendly terms with other tribes. The reputation of the owner was thereby enhanced as his prowess was ever more widely acknowledged.

Enemy-Friends

572 In accordance with the general prestige pattern, an outstanding warrior, or one who had aspirations toward that end, was expected to be generous as well as brave. Particular significance attached, however, to the disposition of horses stolen from the enemy or of weapons or other trophies obtained from the enemy at risk of life. [602] The giving of such presents initiated a particular relationship between recipient and donor known as the enemy-friendship. This was a kind of "joking relationship" and involved the greatest amount of freedom between the two both in word and action. Whatever one enemy-friend said or did to the other had to be borne with equanimity. Loss of temper involved loss of prestige, and it was said that in some cases one enemy-friend had to suffer patiently audacity which would have led him to murder another not in that relationship. Each tried to out-do the other by kinds of speech and action ranging all the way from the most harmless teasing and jokes to the most humiliating exposition of foibles and misdemeanors.

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The addition of the four "chiefs" of the Grass dance gave scope for public recognition of the middle-aged men of substance esteemed for their wisdom and judgment to whom office-holding proportionate for their dignity was otherwise denied. Although there was no longer opportunity for the ranks of warriors to swell, those who had in the past performed brave deeds could still gain status by being called upon to publicly recount them at the ceremonial eating of dog flesh and by being selected to handle the feathered bonnets.

As the younger men had no chance to show their prowess in warfare and hunting, there was a change of emphasis to recognition of superior singing and dancing ability as one of the roads to public approval. This latter was brought out clearly by our informants when explaining the qualifications of those sought for the various officers of the Grass dance as it was performed around the turn of the century.

They stated that much of the success of the performance of the Grass dance depended particularly on the singers of the dog ritual songs. The four singers who owned the ceremonial drumsticks were chosen for their good voices and from among the "lively men who liked to do things." The candidates did not have to know the songs in advance because they could be trained. Two noted teachers were The Boy and Joe Big Beaver. The Boy said he used to "campaign against himself" when it was time for a drumstick to be transferred because "he didn't want to get tied down. He enjoyed dancing and the singers never got a chance to participate." Our informants told us of two men who are remembered especially as being outstanding singers and drummers, Ed Rider and Breath. The latter was described as a top-ranking singer who, so far as they knew, had never been surpassed. They said: "It was something worth listening to when Breath started those Grass dance songs. He had a voice adapted to that kind of singing and his sense of rhythm was superb. He could hold a big crowd of people spellbound. He was a real genius. Many others tried to copy him and learn from him, but none ever succeeded in equalling him. Regardless of his fine voice no one

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796 even acquired his technique for beating the drum, that is, of be-
178 ginning lightly and then, in an inimitable manner, of increasing
555 the volume. Sometimes the other three singers would let him begin a song and sing it through once just to listen to him. He was left-handed, but he sure could beat the drum! He was a man of whom you could say he had a real personality as far as the Grass dance was concerned but who was not so noticeable outside this one field. He was always deliberate but as soon as he approached the dancing-place he seemed to come alive. He was good at that office in the Grass dance and he knew it. He would sit up at the drum as straight as a lord and never attempted to be inconspicuous as, for instance, by putting his hat down over his eyes. Many of the young fellows who usually didn't join in the dancing and liked to play around on the outside would nevertheless rush from every direction to get to the floor when they saw him coming."

796 While singing had always held an important place in Gros Ventre religious culture, in the past the emphasis had been on the meaning of the song far more than on the quality of the voice and the manner of performing as it was in the Grass dance. Similarly in times gone by what dancing there was in the various rites was more or less perfunctory, whereas in the Grass dance the ownership of the two crow-belts, the fork, the spoon, and the whistle was transferred to those among the younger men who had
[554] physical vigor and endurance as well as grace. For these offices "it took a good-looking young man in good physical condition to perform properly."

796 A still greater innovation was the inclusion of women as officers
178 of the Grass dance. The two ceremonial black dresses were
562 seemingly symbolic of the black paint used in the Victory dance of former years, especially in view of the fact that this was one of the few dances performed by women in the old culture. It should be mentioned, however, that in connection with the Victory dance there had been no formal office nor had the participants therein been under economic obligations. We might hazard the guess that the ownership by women of two of the war-bonnets in